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THE
REMOVAL

OF THE

Sacramental Test

Consider'd, in a

LETTER

TO A FRIEND.



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S I R,

IT is with a great deal of Pleasure
 that I have read over some late Pam-
 phlets touching the Liberty of his
 Majestys good Subjects, the Pro-
 testant Dissenters, in which, with great
 Force of Argument and Reason, has been
 shewn the Necessity and Advantage of
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taking off those Hardships which at present Incapacitate them for serving the Government; I should have been glad if some of them had carried the Matter a little further then I find they have, and that they had more particularly insisted on the Sacramental Test, the which I take to be a Principal Grievance to the best of his Majestys Subjects. I make no Doubt but it appears to you a thing highly just, that those who are own'd real Friends to the Government, Should, at least, have an equal share in it, with suspected Enemies; that those who have so often appeared in the Defence of the Government both in Church and State, should in Gratitude have some favourable Regards shew'd to them, and especially in a time of common Danger, it must needs be for the Advantage of the Government, to have all its Friends render'd capable of serving it. But when I find so many who are either blind to, or

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prejudiced against these things, I hope you will Pardon me if I a little endeavour to make it plain that its a point both of justice and Gratitude, and for the apparent Advantage of the Government, at this time of the Day, to let in all useful Hands.

Let us consider the matter as a point of common Justice, and for my own part I freely declare I have always been of Opinion, that as every one who will not acknowledge the Legality of the Government under which he lives, nor promise Allegiance to it ; can have no just claim to the Priveledges or so much as Protection of that Government ; so, that every one who, bears true Fidelity and Subjection to it, especially those who are Zealously affected to its Interest (as in the Case of the Protestant Dissenters to the present Government) ought to enjoy all the Immunities and Favours to which their Relation and

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Interests in that Government, do entitle them, without respect of Persons. I do not say that the King; whose undoubted Prerogative it is to chuse his own Servants, is obliged thus Promiscuously to distribute his Favours; that must be left to his own will, to chuse whom he in his Wisdom shall think fit to serve him. All that I have my thoughts directed to is the Injustice of of putting a considerable Number of the King's best Subjects and the Nations Friends under a Legal Incapacity of serving their King and Country, tho' the one shou'd think them fit to be employed and and the other should require their Assistance.

Let any Man shew me a Good Reason why those who are own'd to be in all Respects heartily in the Interest of the Kingdom, and as capable in themselves of serving it as others, should yet be secluded from such services because they can't conform

form to those things, which, if observed would make them neither wiser or better, more valuable in themselves nor fitter to serve their Country. Where's the Justice of it that under a Pretence of Religion, and this when examined consists only in a few outward Forms and bare Niceties; a Man shall be depriv'd of his natural and Civil Rights? I should be glad if those furious Gentlemen, who are so hot against the Dissenters being admitted into the Services of the Government, would shew me wherein Christianity has abridg'd a Man of his Civil Rights; or what Reason there is that a person shall be sequestred from his Priviledges as a Man under a Pretence that he is no Christian, or because he does not Worship God just in the same way as some others do. Are not the Dissenters equally Subjects of the same Government, born in the same Land, avowing the same common Political Principles, and as hearty as any in Promoting the Honour of King GEORGE,

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in Endeavours to secure the Protestant Religion, and to maintain the happy Settlement of the Crown in his Majesty's Illustrious House. Nay are they not One with the Church of England in all her fundamental Articles of Religion ? and for what Reason must they be treated with marks of Infamy, traduc'd as Enemies to the State as well as Schismatics from the Church, and loaded with such Hardships as not to be thought worthy to serve their King or Country in any Post of Honour, Trust or profit ? Is not this very hard Treatment, might we not expect better from those for whom and with whom we so long and patiently suffer'd ? I hope the Time is at Hand that Justice will be done to the Friends of the Government, and all his Majestys Faithful Subjects shall be made easy and usefull; till this be done I must take the Liberty to say that the Prerogative it self is brought under no small Hardships while his Majesty is depriv'd of the
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Right of employing the Hands of a considerable Body of his most faithfull Subjects; and this, methinks, should have a great Weight with those in the establisht Church who are heartily in King George's Interest.

But not to stay upon a Topick so obvious would it not be as ungrateful as unjust to keep the Hands of those ty'd from serving themselves, who in time of Danger were Instruments, under God, of saving many of your Lives? Have not the Protestant Dissenters allways appear'd in Favour and Defence of the Church, 'tho it manifestly interferd with their own Advantage, when it was in imminent Danger, and threatned with Distructions either from Abroad or at Home. Now their Enemies being Judges of the Truth of the Premises (and he must have a superiour Air of Impudence that dare deny it) how must their own Consciences reproach them for base ungratefull Creatures

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should they be willing continue such a Load of Hardships upon their Protestant Bretheren, who tho't no pains or Expence too much to serve them when they called for or wanted their Help. Sure no sober and considerate Persons but must blush at the Thought of such Hardships continu'd upon such Friends as these.

But cou'd we suppose Men to have Lost all sense of Honour, surely their own Interest should oblige them to do their Friends Justice : Is it not every way for the service and Advantage of the Government to make it self as strong and formidable as it can, by making all, who are willing, capable to serve it ? For suppose that the Church-Whig-Interest was able to support it self without the Help of the Dissenters ; I can't think it would be either injurious or impolitick to secure further Help, when it may be obtain'd upon so easy Terms. But that this Party cannot support themselves or
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the Government, without the Assistance of the Protestant Dissenters, is manifest to a Demonstration, if you consider their great Interest in all Elections of Members of Parliament, that there are not sufficient of the Church-Whigs, in many parts of the Kingdom, to supply the Commissions of Peace, or to make up the vacant Offices in the Militia; the which are of no small Consequence to the support of a Government, as well as the Ease and Happiness of a Subject. Have not the Whigs in many Places lost their Elections, of Mayors, Aldermen, &c. as well as in *London*, of Common-Council-Men, for want of proper Persons to set up? Were we not obliged in the late Rebellion, to call in a Foreign Assistance to defend the Nation, because the Dissenters, who were willing and ready to appear against the Kings Enemies, in that Critical Juncture, were unqualified to serve in proper Posts. Nay if such an unhappy Exigence should again call for Assistance, which

(which God forbid,) are the Kings Friends in the Eſtabliſht Church, capable to make Head againſt his Enemies therein, without the Concurrent Help of the Proteſtant Diſſenters? Pardon me if I think they are not.

So that it appears to me highly neceſſary to make all Capable, who are heartily willing, to ſerve their King and Country in time of Danger. In ſhort, if their be any Juſtice on their ſide in this Affair, if any Gratitude to be ſhewn to 'em from their Friends in the Eſtabliſhment, if any Service to the Nation, to be obtain'd by the Help of Proteſtant Diſſenters, they have a Claim as *Engliſhmen*, and good Subjects, as Zealous in King GEORGE's Intereſt, and that of their Country, to the knocking off their incapacitating Shackles. And ſince theſe things are undeniably true, how can any approve themſelves hearty Friends, to our King, who are unwilling to allow him

him, the Hands and Help of so many his Faithful Subjects, of whose Loyalty and Zeal, he has Graciously declar'd himself to be fully convinc'd. I hope I have now made it appear both reasonable and necessary, to let all his Majestys Faithful Subjects have a Right (as they have already a Heart) to serve him, if he shall think fit to employ them.

The Grand Question now will be, what method is proper to be taken to this purpose; if by the Ministers among 'em you may Judge of the Sentiments of the People; they declare that they do not so much as expect or desire any thing that ought to give any one the least Disturbance, all that they wish for is, that they may be made Capable of Serving their King and Country, without dishonouring their God, or doing violence to their own Consciences; the Act which enjoyns a Total Conformity to the Church, of all employ'd

ploy'd in any Office, &c. under the King, is generally said to be an Act to prevent Hypocrisie.

Some of the Dissenters have all along disallowed the practice of Occasional Conformity, while others of 'em have approv'd of it, and adher'd to the Practice thereof. Those who have not so good a liking to it, tho' they dare not condemn the Persons of those who have Occasionally Conform'd as Hypocrites, yet cou'd not forbear thinking the practice unjustifiable; nay common Experience informs us, that those who among the Dissenters have thus Conform'd for a Place, whatever Conscience they may have of it, have generally been censur'd and Condemn'd as Hypocrites. Since therefore our Legislators have it in their Hearts to ease his Majestys good Subjects the Protestant Dissenters, and to render 'em serviceable, by removing what hinders their being so; it is to be hoped that they will take away

way that Temptation, which may have been a Snare to many, otherwise well meaning Persons, and which has manifestly expos'd 'em to Reproach, by laying aside the Sacramental Test. And that this can be of no Disservice either to the Church or State, or any offence to those who are serious and hearty in the Interest of either, will be undeniably evident from the Sequel.

I must beg leave to ask whether taking the Sacrament as a Test for a Post, be consonant to the Design of our Lord in Instituting that Solemn Ordinance, in Commemoration of his own Sufferings and Death? Whether it be not a Prostitution of the Ordinance to wrong and bad Purposes? Whether it has not a Tendency to take of that Veneration, which Christians ought always to maintain for so Holy and useful an Institution? Whether many have not been forc'd to eat and Drink Judgment to them-

themselves, while they have come to this special Ordinance both Ignorant, and Profane, to qualify themselves for a Civil Employ ? whether many upon this Account have not been brought under this Miserable Dilemma that either they must do Violence to their Consciences or suffer themselves and Families to starve ? Pardon me one Query more whether we may not fear that this is a National Sin, and Provokes God to be angry with us ? I wish I could Give a Negative Answer to these Questions but it behoves me to be silent and to leave the Determination to Wiser Heads. I hope the Right Reverend the Bishops will not think this Affair unworthy their Consideration. The Consciencious Clergy. of the Church of England, know this to be a Hardship upon them, and many of them have actually complain'd of the Burthen, that they must be forced, tho' against their Consciences to administer the Solemn Ordinance of the Lords Supper to Persons of known

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Scandalous Lives, and Debaucht Practices when they have demanded it as a Qualification for a Place of Profit or Honour. It may be Suggested that this is not often the Case, if it be not it must proceed from want of a tender Conscience in the Clergy, for I am well satisfied among so many Offices which require this Qualification, there must not be a few unfit for that holy Communion who yet are obliged to take it or spoil their Preferments. Why should I take Notice of the many in Commission by Land and Sea, do but think what a Number of Officers there are employ'd in the Customs and Excise, all of which are obliged to take the Sacramental Test and you will easily be led to believe that a great many have took it unworthily. At whose Door the Sin lies is not my Business to enquire.

But if after all it shall be thought fit that this Test should still continue, tho' there may be many among the Dissenters

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that may prevail upon themselves to take it, I am confident there would be greater Numbers as well qualified to serve the Government kept back because they dare not take it with such a View. Nay whether many of the Etablisht Church 'emselves who have constantly conformed to it, and attended its Ordinances, have not thro' a tender Conscience and conviction in their own Mind of the unlawfulness, refused to take the Sacrament, when they have been called to receive it as a test, is a thing not to be disputed, Instances are too many to take Notice of them. If therefore we have any Regard to the Honour of God, any Value for our King, any Concern for the Peace and Prosperity of our Country, any Desire to promote pure and undefiled Christianity, or Care to secure the Peace of our Consciences, we must sure esteem the Sacramental Test an unhappy Grievance. I am sure I speak the Mind of many,
and

and those who are otherwise minded I pray God reveail even this unto them.

But besides the Suspicioufnes at best of the thing it self, its very plain the End Design'd is not answered by it, either as to Church or State ; for how many have come to the Sacrament partook of it as a Test, and yet all the while have either been meaning the Mass comeing to it as transubstantiated Bread and Wine, or else have received them as common Elements ; the papists as such can take it in no other sence. In the Time of the Rebellion, how many, who not only took the usual oaths to the Government, but the Sacrament to, as a Test for their Places, were openly engaged in a black and horrid design to bring in the Pretender and with him Popery and Slavery.

These are undeniable Matters of Fact. They knew very well that [an easy Dispensation might be had for all this; Nay it is not to be

be doubted but that many have taken these things with a Dispensation from their Pretended Holy Father, the Pope to break them on the first convenient season that offer'd ; such is the Treachery and Dissimulation of the Papists that they can assume any Shape and turn themselves into any form to serve a Turn.

Its plain that this can be no Bar to the Papists in the way of preferment ; but all the while many thousand Conscientious Protestants are excluded by it.

But further I am very apt to think that notwithstanding the Multitudes who have took the Oaths to King GEORGE while they had a squint Eye at the Pretender, and design'd to keep them no longer then while they had an Opportunity to break them ; the solemnity of an Oath does yet fix a greater Awe upon the Consciences of the Generality of Persons, then the seriousness
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of a Sacrament which crouds partake of not knowing what they do, nor wherefore they do it, so that if a solemn Oath which the sacred Scriptures have made to be the End of all Controversy will not keep Men to their Duty and Allegiance I am very Confident taking the Sacrament as a Test will never do it.

If now the Sacramental Test be no Security to the Government from Papists or others its avowed Enemies; if it be a manifest Hindrance to a great Number of his Majesty's Protestant Dissenting Subjects, from serving in any Office or Employ under him. I hope our Legislators will take it into Consideration whether it be not proper to lay it aside. If these short Hints may be of any Service I have my Ends. I conclude with my hearty Prayers to almighty God, to Preserve the person of our Rightful and Lawfull Protestant Sovereign King GEORGE, to direct both Houses of Parliament to Proper Measures for the Securing
our

our Peace and Happiness, and to unite
and Engage the Hands of all faithful Sub-
jects in one Common Interest, which is
that of our King, our Country, the Protef-
tant Religion and Succession, that so peace
may continually dwell in our Walls and Pro-
sperity within our Palaces

I am,

Sir, your most

Obedient Servant, &c.



FINIS.

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